

MOTORCYCLES: YOU CAN'T KNOW IT ALL

KNOWLEDGE

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OFFICIAL SAFETY MAGAZINE OF THE U.S. ARMY

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- DISTRACTED DRIVING
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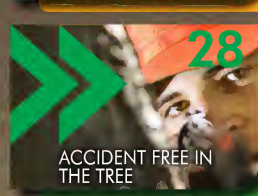
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Mission statement: The United States Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center (USACR/Safety Center) supports our Army by collecting, analyzing and communicating actionable information to assist Leaders, Soldiers, Families and Civilians in preserving/protecting our Army's combat resources.

We welcome your feedback. Please email comments to safe.knowledge@conus.army.mil.

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THE 'WHY' OF SOLDIER INDIS

I've seen and done a lot during my years in this great Army, and it's not often that I'm easily surprised. Shortly after I arrived at the USACR/Safety Center, however, I was somewhat taken aback by a single statistic: We lose four Soldiers in off-duty accidents for every one we lose to an on-duty accident. I've been in the field throughout my career, and it can be hard to see the cumulative effects of these losses regardless of where the unit is in the Army Force Generation process. But that doesn't make the negative impacts of a Soldier's death any less real or any easier to accept for his or her battle buddies, Family and friends.

I have several ideas on what's important in Soldier safety, but I'd like each of you, particularly our junior NCOs, to think about something. Why is it your Soldiers can do everything right on duty, but mess it all up when they leave to go home? We've all seen them: the Soldier who unbuckles his seat belt right outside the gate, the one who never wears a helmet off post and the other who habitually speeds well in excess of posted limits or drives after a night of drinking with his buddies. The fact is there are always a few Soldiers who throw away everything that's important to them at the end of the day. As Leaders, it's up to us to figure out why they do so

and how to reach them before something tragic happens.

During my time as an NCO, three essential elements have remained constant in keeping Soldiers safe: discipline, enforcement of basic standards and communication down to the lowest level. We have to place the responsibility for high-risk behavior where it belongs — on Soldiers who willfully disregard the standards and Leaders who turn a blind eye to it. Indiscipline kills Soldiers, not motorcycles or cars! Whether on or off duty, the personal and professional consequences of risky behavior are high, and Leaders have to show their Soldiers they're

serious about safety and the enforcement of standards.

I came to the USACR/Safety Center from the 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, and had just redeployed from Afghanistan when I received notification of my assignment here. That deployment is one of the proudest accomplishments I've ever had as a Soldier. After spending a year in some of the harshest environments on earth, flying and driving hundreds of thousands of miles and completing missions that ranged from combat to humanitarian relief, every single one of our men and women came home to their Families and loved ones. This didn't happen

“PEOPLE have to be the **PRIORITY**; you can replace **EQUIPMENT**, but you **CAN'T** replace a **SOLDIER!**”



DISCIPLINE



because I was their sergeant major or because every Soldier acted safely all the time; it happened because Leaders did their jobs. We had a culture where Leaders were empowered to make tough decisions, Soldiers knew they were held to the standards and communication flowed effectively between ranks and organizations.

I share that story with you because it proves Leaders can develop a culture of safety and still execute their unit's most critical tasks. Although our Soldiers were limited in what they could do off duty and had no access to privately owned vehicles, motorcycles or anything else to potentially get them in trouble, there was plenty

of opportunity for indiscipline to creep in on the roads and in the air over Afghanistan. None of our Soldiers were perfect and some might argue we were simply blessed, but there's no doubt that commitment to safety and standards played the biggest role in our success. People have to be the priority; you can replace equipment, but you can't replace a Soldier!

There's no job I love more than taking care of Soldiers, and I intend to do just that as command sergeant major of the USACR/Safety Center. This position gives me a unique opportunity to travel and visit with units around the world, and I look forward to hearing your thoughts on safety and its role

in our Army today. I appreciate frank and honest discussions, so please let me know how you feel and how we can help you keep your Soldiers safe. Thank you all for what you do every day!«

Army Safe is Army Strong!

Richard D. Stidley

RICK STIDLEY
Command Sergeant Major
U.S. Army Combat
Readiness/Safety Center

ALL THINGS CONSIDERED



NAME WITHHELD BY REQUEST

The mission, a cross-country flight in Pakistan, was now becoming routine. Our flight of four CH-47s was to depart under night vision goggles (NVG) and take supplies to Kandahar, Afghanistan. Crew selection is always an important part of pre-mission planning, and I was paired with a senior aviator who had just been signed off as an NVG pilot in command (PC). The decision was made that our aircraft would be lead because we both were NVG PCs.

Our flight departed just after sunset and headed north toward Afghanistan. We always flew at altitude while in Pakistan to avoid small-arms fire, but when we crossed the Afghanistan border, we descended to terrain flight altitude. Once inside Afghanistan, the weather began to deteriorate and visibility steadily decreased due to blowing sand. The zero-illumination conditions and blowing sand made artificial lighting useless and a hindrance.

Despite the conditions, we picked our way through the sand dunes to Kandahar. After

landing, I went to talk with the other crews about the return trip. After having a conversation with a friend who suggested we make the flight at 500 feet above ground level (AGL), I returned to tell the other pilots the change in plans.

During our run-up procedures, the briefed PC determined it would be too risky to fly at an altitude of 500 feet in Afghanistan. Instead of arguing, I decided we had made it in and we would make it back out the same way. I briefed the rest of the flight on the most current change. We departed Kandahar with no problems

for the return trip.

We had been flying for about 15 minutes at 125 feet AGL when the lack of illumination and blowing sand made it impossible to see the desert floor. I was on the controls, and the other pilot was calling out altitude using the radar altimeter. I looked at the radar altimeter and saw our altitude had dropped to 100 feet. I put in a small amount of power to start a climb and noticed the radar altimeter read 80 feet. The next thing I saw was the radar altimeter reading eight feet.

At that point, a crewmember began



yelling that he had terrain out the cabin door. I immediately applied maximum power and aft cyclic, but there was a huge impact — much like a car accident. The rotors lit up as the sand flew into the air from the impact. We both struggled to maintain control of the aircraft after striking the ground. No one saw it coming and we weren't sure if it was over, but within seconds, I regained control of the aircraft and returned to level flight.

We suddenly received a call over the intercom from our crew chief (CE) in the back that the ramp was missing. With our hands full flying the aircraft — to include eight caution

capsules and inter-flight communications, among others — losing a ramp didn't seem like much of a problem. Hearing fear in the CE's voice, I tried to calm him down by telling him not to worry about the ramp. However, I was not expecting his next transmission: "Clay was on the ramp." Clay was our flight engineer (FE), and I knew there was no way

LEARNED A LESSON LATELY?

We don't have to learn our lessons the hard way — through accidents. We can also learn from close calls, near misses and minor mistakes — both our own and those of others. This is an opportunity for us to share experiences with each other. They can be long or short, recent or from the past. Share your lessons learned with all of Army aviation by sending your "war story" to Knowledge at safe.knowledge@us.army.mil.



he could survive what had just happened.

As hard as it was, we had to make a quick decision. We now had the task of saving the remaining five lives onboard the aircraft. We made a radio call to the rest of the flight to inform them we had lost our FE. The other aircraft volunteered to remain in the impact area to search for Clay. The weather continued to deteriorate and, while conducting a brief search, two more aircraft in the flight almost slammed into the ground.

We decided to make our way back to Kandahar. While en route, we performed a damage assessment. All four landing gear were ripped off, as was the ramp; both main fuel tanks were cracked; and the aircraft structure was bent in two places. We also had

multiple fuel leaks and no utility hydraulic system.

Thankfully, there was good news. On our way back, the CE began yelling that we still had Clay. I thought, "What?" The CE spotted him hanging in his harness underneath the aircraft. He had done what was briefed and hooked his tail to the aircraft floor, not the ramp. The remaining three people in the back were unable to pull Clay into the aircraft. I knew that with the blowing sand, we never would be able to get him if we put him down.

We made an emergency call to tower, explained our position, and told them to have an ambulance waiting for us at the end of the runway. As we approached the runway, we had to be extremely careful. We couldn't land because we didn't have any gear, and

we didn't want to cause any additional injuries to Clay. We lowered him to the runway, and the CE cut Clay's restraint.

After rescuing Clay, we continued down the runway and were instructed to hover until a landing pad could be constructed. Ground support personnel and fellow pilots built a landing pad out of Air Force pallets. I was able to get the aircraft on the pallets and shut it down without further incident. As it turned out, we'd hit a 150-foot wall of sand on the backside of a river valley. We didn't descend; rather, the ground came up and we never saw it.

Lessons Learned

When I think back on that night, there were many things we could have done that might have helped us avoid this situation. I want people to learn from what we went through because no one died. This was not a training mission, so the rest of the crew and I wanted to make sure we accomplished this mission.

This incident could have ended tragically, and I would venture to say we were about four feet from that happening. Zero-illumination operations are what we train to fly in and learn to love due to the concealment darkness provides. Nevertheless, when flying over very low-contrast

terrain with blowing dust and sand, special considerations must be taken, including possible adjustments to altitude and airspeed. When I left Afghanistan, no NVG flights were allowed if illumination was below 23 percent. I'm not sure this restriction is the answer, but it has helped.

We all, as Army aviators, want to complete our missions successfully and safely. We must do whatever it takes to complete the mission, but we can't let things stack up against us to the point an accident happens. Remember that the mission can be changed without canceling it. If you have the luxury of flying with a crew in the back of the aircraft, listen to them. Without our crew's quick thinking and decision-making abilities, this would have been a fatal accident.

The final point I would like to mention is Clay hooked his tail to the aircraft floor and not to the ramp, just the way he had been taught. If he would have done otherwise, well, I don't want to think about that. All things considered, we were very lucky. I hope my experience will help others recognize when conditions warrant a change of mission. «

... if it happens



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U.S. ARMY COMBAT READINESS SAFETY CENTER

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A BAND OF BROTHERS
& SISTERS

COMING OCT. 3

You Can't Know it All



MAJ. HENRY H. WASHINGTON
G3, Accident Investigations Division
U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center
Fort Rucker, Ala.

After riding motorcycles for more than 27 years, one tends to think he knows all there is to know. Well, I am here to tell you nothing is further from the truth.

On Sept. 10, 2010, while on my way to work, I had one of the worst scares of my life. I was riding at the speed limit when a driver in the oncoming lanes attempted to make a left turn as I rode toward her. As I approached, I just knew she had to see my fluorescent vest and the big, bulky Suzuki Hayabusa sport bike I was riding. Just as I was about to go by her, she turned left in front of me to enter a McDonald's parking lot. I quickly pumped my rear brakes and lightly hit my front brakes to slow down and swerve so I didn't T-bone her. As it was, I barely missed going into oncoming traffic and only cleared her passenger-side taillight by inches. What saved me from injury in this incident? It was my experience, training and individual safe riding attitude.

I was surprised that morning. I found out you can't take anything for granted when you're riding. Unfortunately, not all Soldiers who ride have the experience or self discipline to do the right thing. Since fiscal 2004, more than half of Army motorcycle fatalities were single-vehicle accidents where riders exercised poor judgment and made bad risk management decisions. Those were fatalities that didn't have to happen. As riders in the Army, we are given the tools to prevent them. In view of the spike in motorcycle fatalities in fiscal 2011, it's worth taking a moment to review these.

Training

If you're a Soldier, Department of Defense Instruction 6055.04 and

Army Regulation 385-10 require that you go to motorcycle "boot camp." Nope, it's not the basic training you went through when you joined up; it's the Motorcycle Safety Foundation's (MSF) Basic RiderCourse (BRC). You're given the opportunity to trade what you don't know for the skills needed to survive on the street. Under the guidance of trained instructors, you learn a number of valuable riding techniques, including proper braking, cornering and obstacle avoidance. Aside from the training being a requirement, it makes sense to get all the skills you can before going onto the road. Remember, on the road your motorcycle isn't at the top of the "food chain." Those Soldiers who choose to be reckless reflect poorly on the



Mentorship Program (MMP). The MMP takes new riders out of the controlled environment of their BRC training to give them hands-on experience on the street with seasoned riders. Among the things stressed are wearing the proper personal protective equipment (PPE), how to ride in groups, how to avoid other motorists' blind spots and how to properly corner and maneuver around obstacles. Under the watchful eyes of seasoned riders, new riders don't have to learn the rules of the road the hard — and sometimes painful — way. MMPs also offer riders a positive alternative to off-post clubs where they may be encouraged to ride recklessly.

Dress for the Crash

No matter what kind of motorcycle you ride, eventually you're going to meet the road "up close and personal." When those moments occur, you'll appreciate having something separating your head and your hide from the highway. Asphalt tends to be harsh on bare skin, and concrete can crack even the hardest skulls. Therefore, wearing good PPE is the rider's ace-in-the-hole when things go wrong on the road.

While riders like to look good and there's plenty of expensive, "sexy" gear available, you don't have to put a hole in your wallet to avoid putting one in your hide. You simply need to make sure your gear meets the following standards:

- Department of Transportation-approved helmet that fits well

- and is in good condition
- Impact or shatter-resistant goggles, wrap-around glasses or a full-face shield properly attached to the helmet meeting American National Standards Institute Code Z87.1
- Sturdy footwear, leather boots or over-the-ankle shoes
- Long-sleeved shirt or jacket, long trousers and full-fingered gloves or mittens designed for motorcycle use
- Brightly colored, outer upper garment during the day and reflective upper garment during the night for on-road riding
- For dirt bike and other off-road riders, knee and shin guards and padded full-finger gloves

While even the best PPE can't fully protect you if you're hit by a car or strike a solid object, it can lessen your injuries and speed your recovery by keeping your wounds clean.

Although it's impossible to eliminate all riding risks, you can lessen your chances of winding up in an Army Ground Accident Report. Your most important piece of safety gear is the one your helmet is designed to protect — your brain. Practice the skills you learned in your MSF training; don't let them get rusty. Seek the wisdom of more experienced riders so you don't have to learn from "scratch," bruise or broken bone. And never assume you know it all when you're riding. Someone's likely to come along and prove you wrong.◀

rest of us riders. Because of that, it's in our own interest to police ourselves and our fellow riders.

Motorcycle Mentorship Program

Not every Soldier out there has 27-plus years of riding experience to call on when things go wrong on the road. But there is a practical answer to that within the Army's Motorcycle

WHAT'S ON YOUR NOGGIN?

Not all helmets will do a good job of protecting a rider's head in an accident. Will yours? To find out, go to <http://www.nhtsa.gov/cars/testing/comp/fmvss218/>.



LISTEN TO THE LOCALS



CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER 3 BENJAMIN L. BOWER
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In the summer of 2002, I was in the U.S. Navy and stationed on the South Pacific island of Guam. Guam is a tropical island where the temperature of the crystal-clear water is in the mid to upper 80s year-round. Abundant ocean wildlife, combined with numerous shipwrecks and other leftovers from World War II, create a perfect ocean paradise. As an avid outdoor enthusiast, I spent a lot of my free time enjoying the ocean's beauty, above and beneath the endless emerald-blue waves. Little did I know I would soon face death more closely than I could have ever imagined.



When I first arrived in Guam in the fall of 1999, I received a mandatory water safety briefing, which was required for all military personnel arriving on the island. We were told of the perils of certain ocean wildlife and wreck diving and how the ocean currents can be treacherous. Of course, I, being a young, strong swimmer and accomplished scuba diver, listened with a detached coolness to the stories of those unfortunate souls who had lost their lives or been injured. I thought nothing terrible like that could ever happen to me.

During my time on the island, I enjoyed the thrills of day and night scuba diving, jet skiing, jungle adventures, cave hunting and the wonderful island food. While all of this was well and

good, I wanted something more adventurous. I'd seen breath-hold free-diving competitions on TV and thought that would be an exciting challenge. How great would it be to build up my ability to hold my breath for long periods, dive as deep as possible without worrying about decompression on the ascent and swim free like a dolphin without cumbersome scuba equipment to slow me down? Armed only with a mask, snorkel, weight belt and fins, I attacked this new challenge with enthusiasm and soon fell in love with the thrill of it.

As time went on and my confidence grew, I decided to add another challenge to test my free-diving skills — spear fishing. I had already fished on the reef with an apparatus called a Hawaiian sling, which is a simple device consisting of a 6-foot spear that has a loop of rubber attached to the opposite end. It is good for short ranges and small fish, but I wanted big fish. So, I bought a spear gun that uses very powerful

rubber bands to launch a 6-foot steel spear into fish at more than 20 feet away. The spear is attached to the gun with a thin cable, and then the gun is attached by another line to a small buoy at the surface. If you get a really large fish that takes you on a wild ride, forcing you to let go of the spear gun, you can retrieve it and the fish after it tires itself out. This was right up my alley! Whenever I had a free moment, I was in the water hunting the “big ones.”

Longing for bigger “game,” I decided to set my sights on spearing a shark. I figured the best way to find them was to ask the locals where I could find the best shark fishing. The general consensus was the shallow reef just off the south end of the island was frequented by some decent sharks — not too big, but big enough to be fun. They also warned me the currents there

could be tricky. They told me to ensure I stayed over the reef close to the shore, where the water is relatively shallow. Under no circumstances was I to go out past the reef, where it drops off abruptly into the Mariana Trench. That's where the huge Great White and hammerhead sharks cruise just off the reef. People who go out there don't come back, they warned.

A few days before a friend and I were to go shark hunting, a typhoon passed near the island, causing the surf to be unusually



DID YOU KNOW?

The deepest known point in Earth's oceans is called **The Challenger Deep** at the southern end of the Mariana Trench. Located about **210 miles southwest of Guam**, it is more than **36,000 feet — or about 6.8 miles — deep.**

high and rough. Unbeknownst to us, there were very strong currents over the reef. When we slid into the water that day, we were blissfully ignorant of what was about to happen.

We snorkeled just a few yards away from the pier where we'd entered the water and promptly noticed we were moving very quickly over the reef. I signaled to my buddy that we should head back, and he replied with the OK sign. As we turned to head back, I realized we were not getting any closer to the pier. The current was taking us straight out to sea! The huge waves crashing on the jagged shoreline on either side of the rip current we were in made it suicidal to swim perpendicular to the shore like you are supposed to do. I felt a huge wave of despair as we were helplessly swept out past the

protection of the reef and into the black void of the open ocean.

After two hours of fighting the current, we were both mentally and physically exhausted. One of us would have our head in the water searching for sharks while the other would watch for boats — the whole time wondering if we would ever see our loved ones again. As I prayed for a miracle, we drifted into a path of calm water. With renewed hope and the very last bit of our strength, we swam in that thin path all the way to the pier. Once there, we had to be helped out of the water due to utter exhaustion.

We were blessed that day. The wise decision would have been to wait for calm conditions and monitor the currents before jumping into the water. We also didn't leave ourselves an escape route. I learned many lessons that day I'll never forget. I'm thankful I survived and hope my story will prevent another thrill-seeker from making the same mistakes. ◀



Family strong!



Family engagement kit

<https://safety.army.mil>

On the home front, a Soldier's "battle buddy" is often his or her Family. Check out the new Family Engagement Kit to learn how you can look out for the safety of your Soldier. The kit features a variety of tools, including videos, real-life stories, resources and tips to keep your Soldier safe.



**ARMY SAFE
IS ARMY STRONG**

**1 HAND 4 BROTHERS
& SISTERS**

WHO ... ME? DRIVE DISTRACTED?

COMPILED BY THE KNOWLEDGE STAFF

Say the words “distracted driving” and most folks think of teens texting or gabbing excitedly among themselves while navigating the streets. However, teens aren’t the only ones out there paying less than full attention to the road. Distracted driving can just as easily happen to anyone — maybe even you.

According to information at www.distraction.gov, the official government website for distracted driving, there are three different types of distraction that can set up drivers for a crash. They are:

- Visual — taking your eyes off the road
- Manual — taking your hands off the wheel

- Cognitive — taking your mind off what you’re doing

Texting is perhaps the classic example of distracted driving. What makes it so dangerous is it involves all three types of distraction. However, distracted driving is not limited to texting or talking on a cellphone. Here are some other

examples that fit the description:

- Eating and drinking
- Talking to passengers
- Grooming
- Reading, including maps
- Using a smartphone or navigation system
- Watching a video
- Fiddling with the car stereo

To combat the distracted driving problem, the Department of Defense has banned drivers from using hand-held cellphones on military installations. Also, many states and municipalities have joined the campaign to eliminate distracted driving by imposing their own restrictions.

Have you ever noticed the driver in the lane beside you holding a cheeseburger in one hand, a drink in the other and steering with their knee? Such "dashboard dining" — a common practice for some motorists — is also distracted driving. What about you? Have you ever tried to avoid spilling your soda or having the pickle squirt out of your hamburger while changing lanes? Be honest.

Chances are, if you drove on post this morning, you may have driven distracted. After all, what happens after you show your Common Access Card (CAC) to the gate guard? You're expected to be on your way, all the while fumbling to get your CAC back into its carrier. While both hands are busy doing that, how are you steering — with your elbow? And where are you looking and what is your mind focused on?

The simple solution to the "CAC distract" is to put it in your shirt pocket, toss it on an empty seat or maybe put it in the cup holder in the console. Whatever you choose, it's a lot safer to put it back in the holder after arriving at work and shutting down your vehicle.

A closer look at data from distraction.gov reveals some surprising facts from agencies such as the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration:

- Twenty percent of injury crashes in 2009 reportedly involved distracted driving.
- Of those killed in distracted driving crashes, 995 reportedly involved a cellphone-distracted motorist.
- In 2009, 5,474 people were killed on U.S. roadways and an estimated 448,000 were reported injured in distracted driving crashes.
- Drivers younger than 20 are the most at risk, with distracted driving playing a role in 16 percent of all highway fatalities for this age group.
- The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety reports drivers using hand-held devices quadruple their risk for injury-producing accidents compared to those who stay off the phone.

So how badly does distracted driving impair a driver's skills? The University of Utah found drivers using cellphones, including hands-free models, had similar reaction times to motorists with a blood alcohol concentration of .08 percent (legally drunk).

The statistics prove distracted driving is dangerous. But the real question is the one you'll have to ask yourself: "What am I doing behind the wheel that is more important than driving?" Then ask yourself, "Is it more important than living?" «

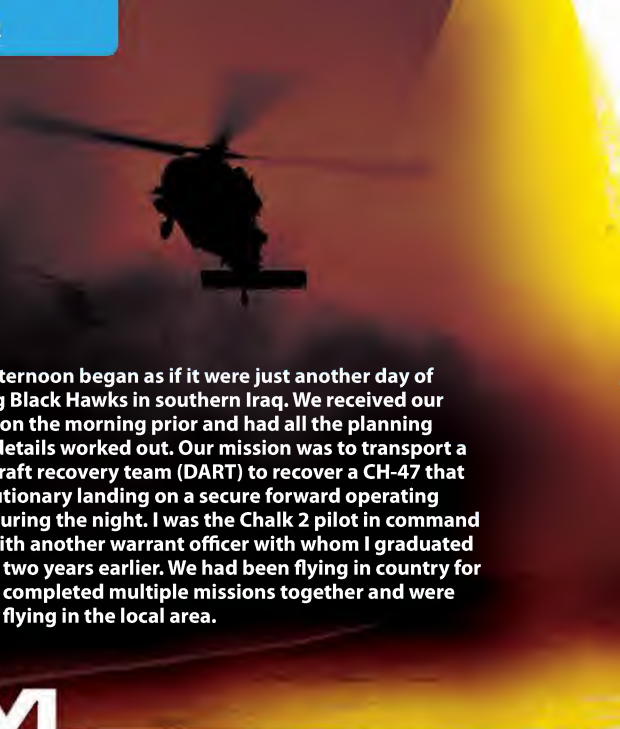
LEARN FROM TRAGEDY

Request or download a copy of this emotional story and learn how distracted driving changed a family forever.



THE 10 WORST DAYS

Go to <https://safety.army.mil> and learn about the dangers of texting while driving.



The afternoon began as if it were just another day of flying Black Hawks in southern Iraq. We received our mission the morning prior and had all the planning and details worked out. Our mission was to transport a downed aircraft recovery team (DART) to recover a CH-47 that had a precautionary landing on a secure forward operating base (FOB) during the night. I was the Chalk 2 pilot in command (PC) flying with another warrant officer with whom I graduated flight school two years earlier. We had been flying in country for five months, completed multiple missions together and were comfortable flying in the local area.

'I'M

IIIMC

CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER 2 ADAM KELLERMAN
A Company, 1st Battalion, 106th Assault Helicopter Battalion
Illinois Army National Guard
Peoria, Ill.



About two hours before launch, we received our weather brief and were informed that we could expect excellent visibility and no ceilings during our flight. However, there was a thunderstorm building in northeast Iraq, but it was not considered a hazard to us. We were briefed for a 1,000-3 (1,000-foot ceiling and 3 statute miles of ground visibility) night vision goggle (NVG) flight because we would be returning after dark under goggles. We had executed this mission many times in the past weeks and considered it routine.

As we neared takeoff time, there was some confusion with arrival times of the DART recovering the Chinook. They showed up on the ramp unorganized and searching for lost equipment and personnel. After this convoluted episode, we were 45 minutes

“ TENSION was BUILDING in the cockpit and I knew my pilot was HESITANT TO TAKE OFF. ”



behind schedule, but this wasn't a time-dictated mission. During the start-up process, flight lead experienced a maintenance issue that set us back two hours, requiring us to fly goggles through evening nautical twilight. We received a new brief and updated weather report and launched to accomplish the mission.

The flight was uneventful until we were about 20 miles south of the FOB. At that point, we noticed lightning north of the FOB and discussed this with the other aircraft. We concluded the lightning was far enough away to not be a threat and only visible because we were wearing NVG. Flight lead made the tower call and cleared us

to the forward arming and refueling point (FARP) to refuel and then reposition to parking to wait for the Chinook to trail us back south.

As we neared the FOB, tower notified us the FARP was closing due to lightning. However, we persuaded them to remain open long enough for us to refuel. On final, tower again radioed and requested our intentions after refuel. They stressed weather was approaching the FOB and we didn't need to loiter long in the landing zone. Through our Blue Force Tracking, we received approval to leave the DART team and return to base without the Chinook, as our battalion did not want two UH-60s to remain overnight.

Following refuel, we repositioned and began unloading personnel and equipment. We noticed the wind was increasing and there was dust in the air. Tower, at this point, was adamant we take off shortly and not remain on the ground long. Following flight ready calls, flight lead called tower requesting a “present position takeoff” departing to the south, which was approved.

The wind continued escalating with visibility diminishing due to dust. Flight lead picked up and turned to the south for departure. I was in the left seat, looked left and noticed the buildings and lights began to disappear in the

oncoming haboob. Tension was building in the cockpit and I knew my pilot was hesitant to take off.

After a few seconds of discussion, he announced I could have the controls. I knew at this point if we did not take off, flight lead would be flying single ship back to base because it was impossible for them to return to parking. I announced I had the flight controls and departed with an immediate right turn toward the south. I still had visibility and my right-rear crew chief (CE) had eyes on flight lead and was verbally clearing my right turn.

All of a sudden, everything disappeared. We were engulfed

in the haboob at about 200 feet above ground level. My CE announced he could not see anything. With seconds seeming like eternity, I announced I had inadvertently entered instrument meteorological conditions (IMC) and initiated the proper procedures. The only thing on my mind was to stop turning, level the aircraft and, most importantly, climb.

THE FIVE C's

The Army has procedures that prepare us in the event that we go inadvertent instrument meteorological conditions (IIMC). We brief procedures with the crew before every flight. The aircrew training manual clearly states, step-by-step, what to do. Local standing operating procedures also provide guidance in case we accidentally punch into the clouds.

The Five C's

The Five C procedure is a fast-acting antidote to confusion and anxiety during the first 10 to 15 seconds after IIMC. It is within these critical seconds that the battle with IIMC is won or lost. If aircraft control can be maintained during this initial crucial period, the chances of

surviving an IIMC experience are greatly enhanced.

Whether all Five C's will apply in each IIMC circumstance will depend on existing conditions (e.g., terrain, obstacles, etc.).

1. Control of the

Aircraft: This is the most important factor in recovering from IIMC. You must

convince yourself ahead of time that if you enter IIMC and lose ground reference, your only option is to immediately transition to instrument flight. Level the wings in the attitude indicator, maintain heading, adjust to climb power and adjust to climb airspeed. Once you make the transition, control is established by crosschecking the flight instruments. If you fail to make this transition,

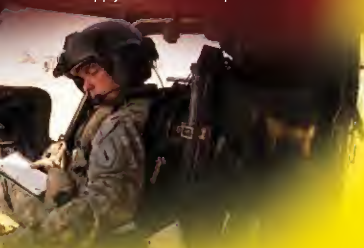
you're in serious trouble. The four subsequent C's depend on the successful accomplishment of this first C.

2. Coordination: Crews must discuss what each will do in case of IIMC. It should be understood that the pilot on the controls will concentrate on the instruments while the pilot not on the controls will back up



After about 30 seconds, the horizon began to appear and visibility improved as we exited the haboob. Just as fast as we were engulfed, we were in an unrestricted visibility environment heading south.

As a young PC, this event was a pinnacle in my career, allowing me to see just how fast a dangerous condition can occur. Following this event, I realized I had endangered my crew and myself by not choosing a more conservative course of action. I learned a lot from this experience. I tell myself to constantly learn every day; evaluate my options; make conservative, effective decisions; and strive to apply them to future operations.◀



the instrument scan, along with all his normal duties, and look outside for a place to land. When flying multiship, each aircrew must coordinate between flights.

- 3. Clearance:** To ensure the highest terrain feature along the route of the flight will be cleared, gain altitude with a straight, controlled climb. Use minimum safe altitudes and low-illumination routes. In mountainous

terrain, consider briefing multiship IIMC breakup to maintain heading and deconflict by airspeed and altitude.

- 4. Course:** Select and turn to the appropriate heading or maintain heading as dictated by terrain.
- 5. Call:** Make required radio calls for assistance. Coordinated radio frequencies should be specified and posted in the aircraft.

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EASY ON THE EYES

CARILLA JONES
U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion & Preventive Medicine
Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md.

More than 40,000 people a year suffer eye injuries while playing sports, according to Prevent Blindness America. However, 90 percent of these injuries can be prevented by using protective eyewear. It's important to remember that whatever game, whatever age, participants need to protect their eyes.

Sports-related eye injuries happen as a result of direct contact with other competitors and from equipment such as bats, balls, pucks, rackets, darts and guns (even air guns). According to the National Society to Prevent Blindness, the leading cause of sports-related eye injuries in 5- to 14-year-olds is

baseball; in 15- to 24-year-olds, it's basketball. In general, the sports with highest risk for a sports-related eye injury for players not using protective equipment are basketball, racquetball, lacrosse, baseball and paintball. Sports that present a medium risk for sports-related eye injuries without the

use of protective measures include tennis, football, golf and soccer.

The good news is almost all eye injuries can be prevented by understanding safety practices and using the proper protective eyewear. Ensure protective eyewear for sports meets requirements specified by the American Society



for Testing and Materials (ASTM).
Published ASTM standards include:

- ASTM F803, Standard Specification for Eye Protectors for Selected Sports, which addresses racket sports, women's lacrosse, field hockey, basketball, baseball and soccer
- ASTM F1776-01, Eye Protective Devices for Paintball Sports
- ASTM F513-00, Eye and Face Protective Equipment for Hockey Players

Remember that regular glasses do not provide enough protection when playing sports. Safety goggles with polycarbonate protectors should be used for racquet sports or basketball. Batting helmets with polycarbonate face shields should be used for youth baseball. Helmets and face shields used when playing hockey should be approved by the U.S. Amateur Hockey Association.

FYI

For more information about vision conservation, visit the Tri-service Vision Conservation and Readiness Program website at <http://dodvision.com/> or Prevent Blindness America at <http://www.preventblindness.org/>. To view ASTM standards, visit <http://www.astm.org/Standard/index.shtml>.

Protective eyewear is only effective if it's worn, and its use should become a habit for participants of all ages. When purchasing protective eyewear, make sure it is designed specifically for that sport or other activity. Check the label on the product to verify the product has been tested, approved and certified.

If an eye injury occurs, consult an eye-care professional immediately. Keep the injured person still and calm to avoid worsening the injury.

For chemical injuries, rinse the eye with water for about 15 minutes before transporting the person to medical care. Wash hands thoroughly before touching an irritated or injured eye, and never rub an eye that has any foreign material in it.

Make vision a health and safety priority. Protect yourself and the ones you love from eye injury. Wear protective eyewear and make sure your children use it too. «

OPEN SEASON

RETIRED SGT. 1ST CLASS JEFF TOLLE
Cadet Command Safety
Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash.

For many Americans, the start of hunting season stirs fond childhood memories of outdoor adventures spent in the field, learning how to hunt from our fathers or another adult. Along with hunting skills, many other lessons about the outdoors were learned. Those lessons have kept countless hunters safe over the years. However, judging by the number of annual hunting accidents, some could stand a refresher course.

Hunter Education

In an effort to reduce hunting accidents, the first mandated hunter education program started in New York in 1949. As these programs spread across the country, safety coordinators established the International Hunter Education Association (IHEA) and developed a core training program to teach

» FYI

In an effort to reduce weapons handling accidents, the U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center has developed the Range & Weapons Safety Toolbox, available at <https://safety.army.mil/rangeweaponssafety>. Check it out today!

young hunters the proper use of firearms and hunting safety. Over the years, this program has evolved into more than just about safety. The goal of hunter education is to instill responsibility, improve skills and knowledge and encourage the involvement of beginner and experienced hunters. Responsible, ethical behavior and personal involvement are essential to safe hunting. In many states, hunters are required to show proof they have completed an IHEA-approved hunter education program before they can purchase a hunting license.

Hunting Seasons

Most of us think of fall as the time of the year when hunters take to the woods in search of big game. However, depending on which state you reside, hunting season can start as early as August and run through the end of January. This time of year can be especially dangerous because of the different activities that attract many non-hunters to the outdoors. There are also some areas where hunting occurs year-round, so it's important to know your local schedule so you don't accidentally wander into an area during open season.

Different Weapons and Hunting Methods

There are many different types of weapons used for hunting, including rifles, shotguns, muzzleloaders, pistols, bows and crossbows. It is imperative you become thoroughly familiar with your weapon, the proper ammunition it uses and all the potential hazards associated while in use. Different weapons can be operated in different

hunting methods, so be sure you know the safety procedures for hunting. Also know the rules for when you or other hunters will be hunting from the ground or walking through an area.

Hunting Accidents

Self-inflicted gunshots are one of the most common causes of accidental discharge injuries and fatalities. These accidents can be greatly reduced by following the

SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST

A good survival kit should fit inside a small pack and weigh just a little more than 4 pounds.

Here are some items your kit should include:

- A lightweight nylon sweat suit (Be prepared should you have to spend the night in the woods)
- Waterproof matches or lighter
- Compass or GPS
- A sturdy, sharp knife
- Duct tape
- Water purification tablets
- Collapsible water bottle
- High-calorie food (candy bars) or beef jerky
- Nylon string or parachute cord
- Signal mirror
- Large handkerchief
- Ax, hatchet or portable saw
- Flashlight and back-up batteries
- Multipurpose tool

 IHEA's Ten Commandments of Safe Gun Handling:

1. Always point the muzzle in a safe direction.
2. Treat every firearm as though it were loaded.
3. Unload firearms and open the action except when ready to shoot.
4. Keep the barrel clear and choose proper ammunition for the firearm.
5. Be sure of your target before you pull the trigger.
6. Never point a firearm at anything you don't want to shoot.
7. Never climb or jump with a loaded firearm.
8. Never shoot at a flat, hard surface or water.
9. Store firearms and ammunition safely.
10. Avoid alcohol and drugs before and during shooting.

Preparation and Survival Skills

It is essential you carefully plan your hunt. Keep the following tips in mind for your next trip:

- Always let someone know exactly where you are hunting, who you'll be with and when you'll return. Leave a map with your hunting "spots" inside your vehicle so help can find you if you don't come home on time. Carry a cellphone or two-way radio. However, be aware that many backcountry areas do not get cellphone service.
- Always carry a survival kit in your backpack and restock it every season before opening day. For items to stock in your kit, see the "Survival of the Fittest" info box on page 25.
- Know how to survive. Take a course or read a book on techniques unique to your location. Know how to obtain water, food and shelter, with water being the most important. The smallest tip could save your

A LIFETIME OF BAD

My most memorable hunting trip was also my last. The memories of that trip still seem as real today as they did 30 years ago. Unfortunately, they only come in the form of nightmares.

When I was 12, my father bought me a new 12-gauge shotgun for my birthday. It was the best present I'd ever received, and I couldn't wait to try it out. I got my chance a few days later when my father took my four brothers and me hunting.

We left the house

that morning before the sun came up. I remember the ground was still covered with a thick frost, revealing the footprints of all of the animals that had passed before us. The trip started out great, and we shot our first squirrel shortly after entering the woods. About two

hours later, however, it took a dangerous turn.

We were all walking through the woods in somewhat of a skirmish line. Unbeknownst to the rest of us, though, one of my brothers had gotten too far ahead, which put him in the direct line of fire. When another squirrel ran in

front of us, I took aim and fired. I didn't see my brother until it was too late, and three of the six shots hit him square in the back. When we got to him, he was bleeding profusely.

For what seemed like an eternity, we all took turns carrying my brother on our backs until we got back to the truck. I had never been so scared in my life and was thankful when we finally arrived

life. Play the “what-if” game.

- Learn first aid and know how to use it on yourself if necessary. Practice self-administered first aid. You'll have a better grasp on

Select a live tree with a diameter that matches the requirement for your tree stand. Before each use, inspect the tree stand for loose, missing or broken parts.

necessary personal protective equipment and slow down so you have control. According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, there are more than 800 deaths and 135,000 injuries related to ATVs each year. About one-third of those deaths and injuries are to children under 16 years old.

“It is **ESSENTIAL** you carefully **PLAN YOUR HUNT.**”

your limitations and be able to react instinctively when seconds count. Also, be prepared if you know there are poisonous snakes or if you have allergic reactions to insect stings or bites.

- If using a tree stand, make sure you understand and follow the manufacturer's instructions.

Also, always wear a safety harness when climbing or sitting in a tree stand. For more information on tree stands, see the article “Accident Free in the Tree” on page 28.

- If using an all-terrain vehicle (ATV), be sure you have taken a course in ATV safety, wear all

For hunters, not much can compare to being back in the woods — touching, smelling and being a part of nature. Keeping these tips in mind should allow you to have fun and successful hunting seasons for years to come without putting yourself or others at risk for injury or death.◀

DREAMS

LEON KNOX
Fort Rucker, Ala.

at the hospital. Up till now, all of us had remained fairly calm. But when our mother arrived at the hospital in a frantic state, the tears began to flow. Fortunately, none of my brother's wounds was life threatening. You can't imagine the relief I felt. I thought I had killed him.

Looking back on this accident, it's easy for me to see the error in my father's

judgment. I know he meant well, but giving a gun to an immature 12-year-old with no training was a bad idea. As a parent, I would never put a gun in the hands of one of my children without first teaching them how to handle a firearm. My family and I were really lucky my brother wasn't killed.

Shooting my brother was the

absolute worst experience of my life and it still haunts me. Today, I don't even like to handle firearms, and I can't stand the thought of shooting an animal. To any parents contemplating buying a gun for their child, please make sure you first consider their age and maturity. You just may save someone a lifetime of bad dreams.◀



ACCIDENT FREE IN THE TREE

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
www.dnr.state.mn.us

Tree stand accidents are the leading cause of injury to hunters. In fact, one in three people who hunt from an elevated stand will have a fall resulting in serious injury. The following information will provide you with tips and information for safe tree stand hunting.

Common Types of Tree Stands

- Fixed-position stand. This stand is designed to be placed on a tree trunk and remain secured in that spot.
- Vertical ladder stand. This type of stand has a ladder that supports the shooting platform. The ladder is usually divided into short sections that can be assembled on site. The ladder "legs" extend at a slight angle out from the stand and tree trunk and are secured to the trunk via supporting arms and belts.
- Climbing stand. The most popular type, this stand is designed to "walk" up a tree trunk with the hunter to a desired elevation.
- Permanent stand. This stand may be placed in a tree or cluster of

trees and left there. They are exposed to weather and may deteriorate. Never trust the safety of a permanent tree stand built previously by someone else.

Safety Harnesses

- Always wear a safety harness, also known as a fall arrest system, when you are in a tree stand, as well as when climbing into or out of a tree stand.
- A safety strap should be attached to the tree to prevent you from falling more than 12 inches.
- In the event of a fall, harnesses provide some "cushion," generally about 4 inches, which is the result of the alternately tightening and slipping of the harness as well as the normal stretch of the material.

- Always inspect the safety harness for signs of wear or damage before each use.
- Follow all manufacturers' instructions for use of a safety harness and stand.

Three-Point Rule

Always have three points of contact to the steps or ladder before moving. This could be two arms and one leg holding and stepping on the ladder, or one arm and two legs in contact with the ladder. Be cautious because rain, frost, ice or snow can cause steps to become slippery. Check the security of the step before placing your weight on it.

Recovery from a Fall

- In the event of a fall in a harness, try to recover as soon as possible. The longer you stay suspended from your harness, the harder it will be to recover.
- Seek suspension relief by grabbing onto the tree trunk or climbing steps.
- Take the weight off your harness as soon as possible.
- Once you have a firm hold on the trunk or climbing steps, use the three-point rule to climb back into — or down from — your stand.
- Replace your harness with a new one in the event of a fall, especially if you have cut your tree tether.

Safety Guidelines

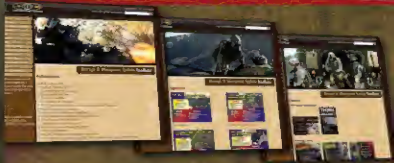
- Always use a haul line to pull up your gear and unloaded firearm or bow to your tree stand. Never climb with anything in your hands or on your back. Before descending, lower your equipment on the opposite side of the tree.
- Always select the proper tree for use with your tree stand. Pick a live, straight tree that fits within the size limits recommended in your tree stand's instructions.
- Always hunt with a plan and, if possible, a buddy. Let others know your exact hunting location, when you plan to return and who you are hunting with.
- Always carry emergency signal devices such as a cell phone, whistle, walkie-talkie, signal flare and flashlight on your person, even when you are suspended in your tree stand.
- Know your physical limitations. Don't take chances. If you start thinking about how high you are, don't go any higher.
- While climbing with a tree stand, make slow, even movements of no more than 10 to 12 inches at a time. Have proper contact with the tree and/or tree stand every time you move and follow the three-point rule.◀

Editor's note: Information reprinted with permission from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources website at www.dnr.state.mn.us.

ARE YOU A SHARPSHOOTER?



<https://safety.army.mil>



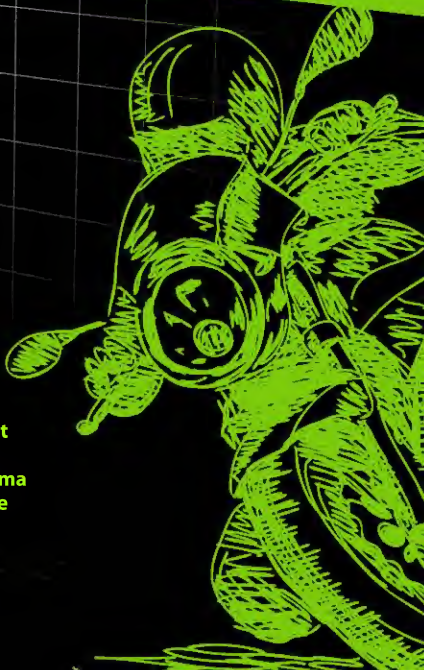
The Range & Weapons Safety Toolbox contains information and tools related to the safe handling of privately owned weapons in addition to resources to establish and maintain effective range and weapons safety programs with military weapons.

CHECK IT OUT TODAY!

FLATLINE

BOB VAN ELSBERG
Strategic Communication Directorate
U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center
Fort Rucker, Ala.

Each heartbeat brought Lt. Col. Robert Key a little closer to death. Bleeding profusely, he was barely alive as he was wheeled into the emergency room (ER) at Vanderbilt Hospital in Nashville, Tenn. He'd already received four units of plasma during the flight from his crash site on Kentucky Highway 41A near Fort Campbell's Gate 6. Suddenly, someone yelled, "Code Blue!"



The ER wasn't where Key had planned to spend the night back on May 29, 2007. He'd worked a bit late to finish the standing operating procedures for his brigade's rear detachment and emailed a copy to four of his co-workers. He kidded them that someone needed to have a copy should he get hit by a truck on his way home. He couldn't have imagined how prophetic that would be.

Key left his office and got ready for the ride home. A dedicated motorcycle rider for more than 25 years, he liked cruisers. Donning his chaps, vest, gloves, helmet and goggles, he got on his Harley-Davidson Fat Boy and headed out Fort Campbell's Gate 3. He could have turned right and gone home through Tiny Town, his normal route. However, it was such a nice day he decided to take a more leisurely cruise. Turning left, he rode along Highway 41A North toward Interstate 24. He had no idea he was

about to meet a dangerous driver on the road.

Mark Bruner (a fictitious name) was also headed north on Highway 41A, one hand wrapped around a bottle and the other on the wheel. Driving a company truck, it wasn't even 5 p.m. and he was already drunk. In a hurry, he'd decided to use the turning lane dividing the highway's north and southbound lanes as his personal "passing" lane. There was a liquor store ahead and he had a date with another bottle. But he wouldn't keep it.

Key had just gotten back up to speed after stopping for a red light. Cruising in the far-right lane, he was aware of the cars in the lanes to his left. Everything seemed normal — or so he thought.

Meanwhile, Bruner realized he was almost to the entrance for the liquor store's parking lot. Quickly, he turned right to cut across all three northbound lanes. But he didn't quite make it. Key's 700-plus-pound Fat Boy was about to turn Bruner's four-wheel-drive pickup into a three-wheeled wreck. Seeing the white truck with its red lettering suddenly pull in front of him, "I grabbed a handful of clutch and hit the brakes," Key said.

He also instinctively steered toward the truck's right-front fender, knowing he was more likely to survive being thrown over the hood than into the pickup's windshield or roofline. Almost instantly, the Fat Boy's solid front wheel slammed into the pickup's right-front wheel, tearing it off the axle.

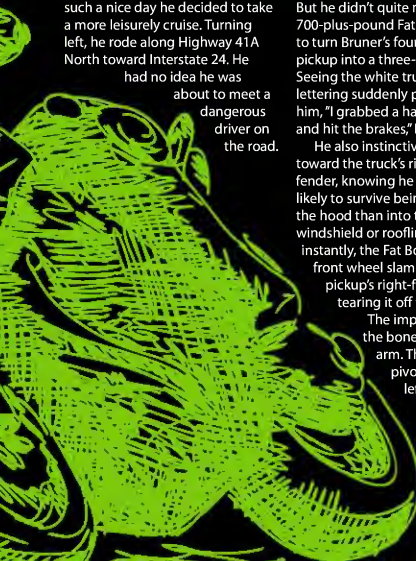
The impact shattered the bones in Key's left arm. The Harley then pivoted toward the left, smashing the pickup's passenger side. As it did, the bike's



left engine guard folded back, catching Key's foot as he was thrown off the bike. Key landed unconscious on the far side of the truck. April Niblett, a nurse from Fort Campbell's Blanchfield Army Community Hospital (BACH), was driving home and happened on the accident. Leaving her car, she ran to Key, who was lying on his back in the road. Holding his head still, she spoke gently as she tried to calm him. The injured rider asked her to call his wife and gave Niblett her number. Looking at Key, Niblett noticed his eyes were wandering as if his mind was trying to process what had happened. Joined by others offering to help, she checked him for injuries.

"We did a 'once-over' — just looking for any injuries we could see with the naked eye," Niblett said. "Obviously, there was blood, so I went to the trunk of my vehicle, where I kept my medical bag. I opened it and started handing out gloves and we started bandaging the injuries where we could."

Working on his left side, Niblett was using a pair of shears to remove his glove when she saw he was bleeding profusely from a compound fracture to his wrist. She





During his first week in the hospital, Key underwent five surgeries to repair 82 fractures. Over the following six months, he would undergo four more operations. Several doctors performed the surgeries, each a specialist for the injury being operated on. The collection of metal pins, screws and plates used in Key's surgeries read more like a shopping list for AutoZone

than one for medical supplies.

But for Key, survival wasn't certain. "I remember thinking, 'Man, you have died this time — I don't think you're going to make it out of this one,'" he said.

Police arrived at the scene first and called Vanderbilt, requesting Key be airlifted to the hospital. Later, as he was being loaded into the helicopter, his wife told him, "I love you and I'll see you when you get to Vanderbilt," Key said.

Those words meant the world to the severely injured rider.

"I told the flight medics, 'Don't let me die before we get to where we're going ... you've got to keep me alive at least that long,'" Key said.

Niblett's efforts had kept Key from bleeding out at the accident scene, buying precious minutes before emergency medical technicians arrived. During the flight to Vanderbilt, the flight medics did their best to keep him alive. Even so, he barely got to the ER before he bled out and flatlined. He'd need four more units of blood before doctors could get his heart beating again and stabilize him. More than a week later, he awoke in the intensive care unit, surprised to find a cast on each limb.

than one for medical supplies.

After spending more than three months at Vanderbilt and a skilled nursing facility in Clarksville, Tenn., Key returned home for rehabilitation. Exactly a year later he returned to work at Fort Campbell, working at BACH through the Warrior Transition Battalion's "Work Site" program as he continued therapy and healing. Grateful to be alive, he recognized the things that made the difference that day.

"I'm a firm believer in helmets," Key said, noting he'd suffered a severe concussion during the accident. "Putting padding between your 'coconut' and whatever you're going to hit is going to help."

He's also a believer in wearing personal protective equipment.

"I always wear leather," he said. "Any kind of cushion you can put between you and whatever you're going to hit, I think, in

some way, bleeds off part of the energy. ... It kills me to see kids out there in T-shirts, shorts and tennis shoes. They're going to get burned from the pipes and the asphalt."

He also believes riders need to practice their survival skills to protect themselves from drivers like Bruner. Each time he returned from a deployment, he found a safe location and practiced his emergency braking and maneuvering skills. He believes it enabled him to make the split-second decision that likely saved his life.

"I think this was one of those one-in-a-million accidents," Key said. "I really didn't see it coming, but I have to think that I instinctively chose to hit that truck where I wanted to."

And then there was Niblett. By helping him at the scene, she gave him the precious minutes needed until emergency medical personnel arrived. By doing that, Key believes she saved his life.

Some riders break the rules and pay the price. Others are the victims of motorists who, like Bruner, disregard others' safety. Key believes he survived that day because he'd protected himself by being prepared for the worst. In his mind, survival is no accident — it's the result of making the right choices. <<



RIDE FOR YOUR LIFE

The Motorcycle Mentorship Program establishes voluntary installation-level motorcycle associations where less experienced riders and seasoned riders can create a supportive environment of responsible motorcycle riding and enjoyment. This can create positive conduct and behavior and serve as a force multiplier that supports a commander's motorcycle accident prevention program.



MMP

MOTORCYCLE MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

Check out the USACR/Safety Center MMP website for some examples of active mentoring programs.

<https://safety.army.mil/mmp/>



ARMY STRONG



U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS SAFETY CENTER

ARMY SAFE
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Unforeseen



Many pilots who have been overseas have experienced some noncombat-related close calls. The extreme temperatures, dusty conditions and less-than-ideal parking situations add up. Combining these factors with fatigue or complacency can create a recipe for disaster. This was the setting for one of my “closer” calls to damaging an aircraft.

If a warning light comes on, a chip light flashes or a system fails completely, most of us can recognize the problem and execute the corrective emergency procedure. However, what about emergencies not covered in the checklist? Training Circular 3-04.11, Commander's Aircrew Training Program for Individual, Crew, and Collective Training, states, “A PC [pilot in command] is an aviator that has demonstrated the judgment and ability to perform all of the mission requirements for the assigned aircraft, uses proper procedures and operates the aircraft safely

Hazards

CAPT. JEFFREY B. MEINDERS
1st Battalion, 145th Aviation Regiment, 1st Aviation Brigade
Fort Rucker, Ala.

and maturely." This means being ready for anything that comes along and quickly understanding the effects. Here's my story.

I was returning from a night mission flying an AH-64D in eastern Afghanistan, and the sun had just come up as we taxied into parking at Forward Operating Base Salerno. As I turned to line up in the drive-through parking setup, my canopy cover flew into the air. These canopy covers are 8- by 12-foot heavy-duty pieces of canvas with straps hanging off them in all directions. It was supposed to have been locked away in the flyaway box located on the parking pad.

My mind started spinning with options and possible consequences. Do I continue forward and hope the cover passes behind me or do I pull the engines off and bring the rotor brake to lock? I thought if I could reduce the induced flow, I could stop the canopy from being sucked in or whipped back through the tail rotor. I didn't even want to imagine what could happen to the crew chief (CE) on the wing cord on the opposite side of the parking pad if the straps came toward him.

Nothing in the checklist even remotely covered this type event. The pilot in the front seat was also fixated on the cover flying over us, wondering why the locked box where the cover was stored was even open. I knew this was a dangerous situation and time was not on our side. I reduced the collective and applied the brakes, as the cover was about 20

feet above and five feet in front of my rotor. The cover stayed aloft in the upward flow of air created by the ground effect and floated over to the next parking pad. We landed safely and I was more than relieved nobody was hurt.

What Happened?

The CE that launched the aircraft had gone back to the flyaway gearbox and left the cover out for unknown reasons. Whether the CE had been sidetracked, re-tasked or an emergency came up, he forgot to close or lock the box, which definitely caused an eye-opening experience for the crew that morning. We saw how easily a dangerous situation materializes by someone's distraction. This could've been a catastrophic accident, damaging the main and tail rotors, requiring the whole driveline to be replaced and, most importantly, injuring or killing all personnel within 50 feet of the aircraft.

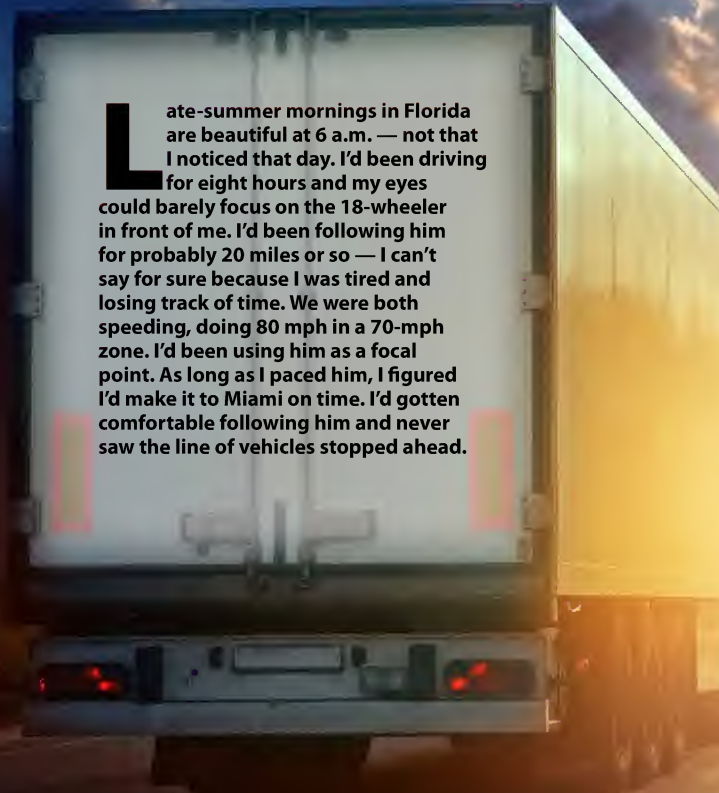
Lessons Learned

Remaining alert while on a long deployment can be stressful, and that is why supervision and teamwork are so crucial to the Army's mission. Not every accident can be predicted, and simply avoiding risks is not safe. That's why we rely on inherent training to know what to do when we have an emergency.

The training PC candidates go through plays a major part in the thought process and actions taken during non-standard emergencies. My unit instructor pilots focused on airworthiness and how to keep the aircraft flying. Challenge pilots. Use "what-if" questions to lead pilots into unfamiliar territory, bringing them outside their comfort zone and into discovery mode. In the long term, challenging pilots increases the safety success of your organization.◀



ALMOST DEAD



Late-summer mornings in Florida are beautiful at 6 a.m. — not that I noticed that day. I'd been driving for eight hours and my eyes could barely focus on the 18-wheeler in front of me. I'd been following him for probably 20 miles or so — I can't say for sure because I was tired and losing track of time. We were both speeding, doing 80 mph in a 70-mph zone. I'd been using him as a focal point. As long as I paced him, I figured I'd make it to Miami on time. I'd gotten comfortable following him and never saw the line of vehicles stopped ahead.

TIRED

SGT. CAMERON RICHARDSON
B Troop, 3-17 Cavalry
Hunter Army Airfield, Ga.

Suddenly, everything seemed to happen in slow motion. The truck slammed into traffic stopped in front of him. His brake lights never lit up, meaning he never noticed the vehicles had stopped. I shifted into fourth gear and slammed on the brakes. Before my eyes I saw the trailer's wall rippling as sparks bounced off my hood.

Fortunately, I was awake enough to react in time. As I came to a stop, I started to realize what had just happened. The semi in front of me had just rear-ended another semi.

The accident happened in the interstate's center lane, and I'd stopped halfway into that lane. I turned on my hazards and pulled into the left lane to block traffic. I grabbed my flashlight and my phone as I jumped out.

I'd never called emergency services before, but I think I did well. I stated my name and location before explaining what happened. The emergency operator told

me I sounded calm. I didn't feel like telling her I'd lived through countless attacks by the enemy.

I approached the truck and could see it was badly damaged. I climbed up to look through the driver-side window into the cab. When I saw the driver, he had a deep depression in his forehead. I immediately knew it was bad. I couldn't open the door and, instead, reached through the shattered window to shake him. Although I yelled and shook him, he never answered.

Hoping to do some good somewhere else, I ran to the truck he'd hit and found the hood open and leaning forward. As I got closer, I could see the rubber on the asphalt. The tire marks must have stretched 20 feet.

Reaching the cab, I found an old man who was trying to remove his seat belt. That scared me. I didn't know if he had any spinal injuries, so I told him to sit back and not move.

As I was climbing down from the

truck, the first police officer arrived.

I later learned that the truck driver in front of me had fallen asleep at the wheel. As I suspected, he was dead before emergency personnel arrived. The older man in the truck he hit was hospitalized for three days and released.

I'd witnessed firsthand how fatigue and complacency can kill and had almost become a part of that accident. That gave me a lot to think about. I'd begun my trip the night before after working 12 hours that day and then driven for eight hours with only a single stop for gas.

Ever since this accident, I've made sure I get at least eight hours of sleep before taking off on a long trip. When I'm on the road, I pull over every couple of hours and, if needed, take an occasional nap. I do these things now because I know firsthand that if I'm driving fatigued, I might as well be driving drunk. ◀

TOO TIRED TO CARE?

Falling asleep at the wheel can turn your vehicle into an unguided "missile" on the highway. To prevent that, the National Safety Council offers the following tips:

- Maintain a regular sleep schedule that allows adequate rest.
- When the signs of fatigue begin to show, get off the road. Take a short nap in a well-lit area. Do not simply stop on the side of the road.
- Avoid driving between midnight and 6 a.m.

• When planning long trips:

- Share driving responsibilities with a companion.
- Begin the trip early in the day.
- Keep the temperature cool in the car.
- Stop every 100 miles or two hours to get out of the car and walk around; exercise helps to combat fatigue.
- Stop for light meals and snacks.
- Drive with your head up, shoulders back and legs flexed at about a 45-degree angle.



AFTER THE STORM

We've all been told what to do when a hurricane or tornado is heading toward our location. But what about once the storm has passed and we're faced with the daunting task of storm clean-up? Unfortunately, I learned firsthand after Hurricane Ike struck the Gulf Coast in September 2008.

Ike covered my "little slice of heaven" in coastal Louisiana — seven acres with a pecan orchard and other fruit trees — with 4 feet of salt water from the Gulf of Mexico. Along with the water came logs, fences, marsh grass, snakes and all kinds of other hazardous items. While some of those items are not necessarily hazardous by themselves, they have secondary hazards associated with them. Let's take a closer look.

Drift logs were everywhere on my property. The logs weren't really hazardous; however, using the saws and axes required to cut them into easily movable pieces brought risks. Before operating a chainsaw, familiarize yourself with the saw and its safety features. Also wear personal protective equipment, including hearing and eye protection. When sawing the logs into sections, cut them into manageable

STEVE RAMKE
Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital
Fort Polk, La.



pieces. Even small sections can be heavy, so have enough people to lift them safely and practice proper lifting techniques using your legs rather than your back.

Washed-up fences were another problem after Ike. Many of these fences had barbed wire attached to them, which can cause cuts and puncture wounds to unprotected skin. The barbed wire also posed a risk to clean-up vehicles, as it could puncture a tire and result in an expensive repair and loss of valuable storm recovery time. Always watch where you step and wear gloves when handling fences.

A lot of marsh grass also washed up along my fence line. In fact, I removed four 16-foot trailer loads of grass from the area. Hazards came from using the rakes and pitchforks needed to remove the grass from around the fence. A good stretch before starting

helped prevent pulled muscles. Additionally, we wore gloves to reduce blisters, as well as steel-toed shoes — just in case something heavy rolled out onto our feet. Constant communication with other workers was also very important to prevent accidental injury.

After Ike, wild critters were an unexpected concern. When I opened my shed, a snake fell out on me! I chased several other snakes out of the shed, and almost stepped on another just outside the door. Any time a log or fence post was moved, someone was on hand to search for snakes. Also, when removing marsh grass from the fence, a spotter was used to look for snakes that may be hiding

FYI

For more information on storm cleanup safety, visit the Federal Emergency Management Agency website at www.fema.gov or Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at www.cdc.gov.

in the mess. Even nonpoisonous snakes can give a painful bite, so just avoid all snakes if possible.

Since much of hurricane season runs through summer, the weather following a storm is often hot and humid — especially in the Deep South. In an effort to get the job completed, we often ignore basic needs. Avoid overexertion by taking proper rest breaks and staying hydrated. Also consider wearing a wide-brimmed hat to keep the sun from beating down on you and sunscreen to protect your skin from sunburn.

Although these are the lessons I learned while restoring my land back into a personal “Garden of Eden,” it by no means is an all-inclusive list. No matter a hurricane, tornado or flood, each offers its own unique challenges. Remember, always prepare for the encroaching storm, but also plan for its aftermath. ◀

DID YOU KNOW?

The Atlantic hurricane season runs June 1 through Nov. 30. Although deadly hurricanes can occur throughout the season, they historically peak in September, according to the National Weather Service. The Eastern Pacific hurricane season runs May 15 through Nov. 30.



LINKS TO

CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER 4 TERRANCE TAYLOR
B Company, 2nd Battalion, 149th General Support Aviation Battalion
Grand Prairie, Texas



Many contributing factors typically lead to an accident, rather than one single event. If any link in the chain is broken, the scenario changes and the mishap could be avoided. This is not just an aviation safety officer's words from a PowerPoint presentation; it is a fact.

There we were one sunny Saturday in December on standby to help fight forest fires when we got the word to launch three aircraft. Everything was uneventful — or so we thought. **Link No. 1** in the chain: the radar altimeter was written up on the aircraft as unreliable, which was a common occurrence at the time. A risk assessment performed by the crew determined it as an acceptable low risk since most of the aircraft had the problem. The crew would mitigate the risk by good crew coordination and

ensuring the barometric altimeter was current and used for reference for height above the ground. The mission was executed, one flight of two and a single ship, en route to two separate locations.

Link No. 2 in the chain: During the first 45 minutes of the flight, the mishap aircraft experienced a hydraulic pump fault light, followed by excessive vibrations and increased temperatures. We executed a precautionary landing (PL) and began searching for the problem. It was determined that a

MISHAP A M I S H A P

hydraulic pump was failing and required replacement. The repair took most of the day as we waited for a part and completed the replacement. During that time, we received numerous calls wanting to know when the aircraft would be available to fight fires, as the fire situation was becoming

to begin firefighting. The location was a large house, and the families were standing outside. Excitement was elevating. The mishap crew made a pass over the target to ascertain a good approach. In turn, we surveyed the departure path as well as a water drop point. Due to the winds and smoke, the

last in this direction. Overhead control was in the process of handing off to a replacement crew and providing the handoff briefing over the radio, making aircraft internal communication difficult. This was **Link No. 4**.

Link No. 5: On approach for the final drop, the pilot not on the controls made a call stating the wires appeared closer than on previous runs. However, he took no other actions other than to direct the aircraft to the drop location. In a blink of an eye, the aircraft shook and began to climb. We first thought it was a heat riser when the crew chief (CE) on the load shouted, "We just hit wires and I punched the load!" That was followed by, "Clear up right!" from the right-side CE to get the aircraft clear of the fire zone and smoke.

Lessons Learned

Breaking the accident chain of events is easier than it might seem, because any chain is only as strong as its weakest link. The mishap chain was five links long, and breaking any one of those links could have prevented the accident. For the first link, we accepted the risk and implemented controls; however, we didn't effectively evaluate our

controls during the mission and failed to make effective control adjustments.

While the second link was unexpected, a PL is a hazard that can be mitigated and controls put into place should the event occur, alleviating the need to rush.

The third link was a direct result of the PL and the desire to complete the mission, preventing clear thoughts to prevail to cancel the mission due to the amount of time it took to get back in the air.

The fourth link could have been broken by putting the intercommunication system pin switches down to improve internal aircraft communication.

Last, but not least, the fifth link could have been broken by the pilot not on the controls being more assertive and taking more aggressive actions when warning us about the power lines. A simple power adjustment could have been enough to clear the wires.

All of the links in this chain of events could have been covered through good composite risk management, which might have prevented the mishap and enabled the crew to complete the mission.◀

**“EVERYTHING
was uneventful
— OR SO WE
THOUGHT.”**

critical and threatening civilian structures. The stress level and the desire to get into the firefight were beginning to rise. The crew completed the maintenance procedures and performed a maintenance run to ensure the system functioned as required.

The rush was on ... **Link No. 3:** As the crew prepared for takeoff, we discussed required actions for arriving on the scene. Once there, we made contact with the overhead control aircraft that provided us a location

approach path direction was limited and placed us over a set of large power lines. We performed a risk assessment and decided to remain high over the power lines and then descend to the drop point once clear. To mitigate further, we referenced the barometric altimeter and provided positive crew coordination to ensure wire clearance.

The radios suddenly got very busy as the mishap aircraft made six successful water drops. Due to the wind shift, we decided the seventh drop would be

I love to ride my motorcycle, and the weather was looking promising. I'd been checking The Weather Channel and anticipating riding to work at Fort Hood, Texas. Finally, the weather was nice enough that I thought I'd give it a chance.

NEVER FOOL WITH MOTHER NATURE

CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER 3 KRISTOPHER A. PHILLIPS
A Company, 4th Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment
1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division
Fort Hood, Texas

I'm what you'd call a "50-50" rider. If the chance of rain is greater than 50 percent or the temperature is lower than 50 F, I'd prefer not to ride. The temperatures had been consistently above 50 F for the last few days, so I decided to skip checking the weather and just ride into work. After all, since each day had been a little warmer than the previous one, why bother?

Well, wouldn't you know it, Mother Nature decided to play a trick on me. After conducting my "accu-window" weather check and confirming it was "clear, blue and 22," I grabbed my motorcycle personal protective equipment (PPE) and suited up. After telling my wife goodbye, I mounted up and started the ride. The trip to work was uneventful.

I got to the office and was greeted with a few "Hi's." When I took off my PPE and turned around, I saw the company rider-mentor looking at me inquisitively. He asked, "Did you ride in today?" For a moment I thought of telling him, "Nope, I'm just wore my PPE today so I could break it in." But, after consideration, I decided not to say that and answered, "Yep — I rode in."

It was at this point he decided it was a good time to inform me of

my error of not checking The Weather Channel. Apparently the 55 to 60 F temperatures of the past few days were not to be. The forecast was calling for temperatures in the low 30s by 10 or 11 a.m., with rain and a chance of snow afterward.

Instead of heading back home with my tail between my legs to fetch my Honda Pilot, I decided to wait until lunch to ride home. After lunch, we were to meet at a theater on the main post for a briefing and then be released. The theater was only about 10 minutes from the hangar and from there it was only another 10 minutes to home. I figured I could ride slowly on post to reduce the effect of the wind chill on my body. Boy, was I about to be surprised!

We headed to lunch a little before 11 a.m. to get a head start on the traffic. The weather was still bearable enough to ride straight home and

“This **EXPERIENCE** taught me to **ALWAYS CHECK THE WEATHER** from a respectable source before heading **OUT TO RIDE.**”

swap vehicles, but I opted to go out with the guys for lunch. This was my second chance to go home and swap vehicles, but, instead, I decided to "tough it out."

While we were eating lunch, the sky fell in. As we headed for the theater, I was given a third opportunity to avoid riding in the rain and cold. One of my buddies offered to take me in his vehicle to the theater. But, since it was only a short distance, I decided to ride.



I got to my motorcycle and waved to my buddy as he took off for the briefing. As I mounted my bike, I thought, "Man, it is cold!" However, now I was stuck with my decision.

I'd barely pulled out when I was already drenched. However, I kept telling myself, "I can do this!" I got about halfway to the theater when I lost feeling in my hands. The rain had also pooled between the gas tank and my legs and was starting to freeze. At that point I decided to go straight home, change into some dry clothes and get warm before hypothermia set in.

This experience taught me to always check the weather from a respectable source before heading out to ride. After all, I'd never take off on a flight without backing up my accu-window forecast with an actual weather briefing. The same thing goes for riding. Never fool with Mother Nature.◀

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AVIATION

AH-64D



CLASS B

- The aircraft experienced a No. 2 engine "high-side" failure during flight and subsequent transmission/main rotor overtorque/speed. The aircraft landed without further incident.

MH-47G



CLASS A

- During initial aerial refueling qualification training, the main rotor blade cut the refueling hose from the MC-130 tanker.

UAS

RQ-7B



CLASS B

- The unmanned aircraft (UA) experienced overtemp conditions and the recovery chute was deployed for emergency landing. The UA was never located.

CLASS C

- The UA initiated an uncommanded full throttle upon landing and became airborne for about 10 feet. The UA then bottomed out, touching down between landing hooks, and came to rest off the runway.
- The UA experienced a generator/engine failure about 20 minutes into flight. The recovery chute

was activated and the UA was recovered with damage.

GROUND

ACV



CLASS A

- A Soldier died when the Mine Resistant Ambush Protected All-Terrain Vehicle he was riding in overturned. At the time of the accident, the driver was attempting to correct the vehicle after it ran off the highway. The driver and gunner suffered non-life-threatening injuries.

CLASS A

- A Civilian was killed when his semi-truck struck the 120 mm gun tube on an M1A2 that was on counter indirect fire patrol. The Soldiers in the M1A2 were not injured.

Personnel Injury



CLASS A

- A Soldier lost his eye when he was struck in the temple by a round from another Soldier's firearm. At the time of the accident, the Soldiers were cleaning their weapons.

DRIVING

POV



CLASS A

- A Soldier was killed when he was struck on the driver's side

LOSSES

AVIATION

ATTACK	5/1
RECON	5/4
UTILITY	2/4
CARGO	2/0
TRAINING	0/0
FIXED-WING	0/0
UAS	4/0

as of Aug. 4, 2011

TOTAL 18/9

by a tractor-trailer at a four-way intersection. The Soldier, who was wearing his seat belt, reportedly failed to yield the right of way at the intersection.

- A Soldier died after he was ejected from the backseat of a vehicle that overturned when the driver drifted off the road.
- A Soldier died when his vehicle crossed into the oncoming lanes and collided head-on with a garbage truck.

LOSSES

GROUND

AMV	5/2
ACV	7/8
PERSONNEL INJURY	31/28
includes weapons handling accidents	
FIRE/EXPLOSIVE	1/1
PROPERTY DAMAGE	6/0

as of Aug. 4, 2011

TOTAL 50/39

Editor's note: Information published in the accident briefs section is based on preliminary loss reports submitted by units and is subject to change. For more information on selected accident briefs, email safe.knowledge@conus.army.mil.

POM



CLASS A

- A Soldier was killed when his motorcycle was struck from behind while he was stopped on the side of a road.

CLASS B

- A Soldier suffered a potential permanent partial disability when his motorcycle collided with a utility trailer being towed by a pickup.

- A Soldier possibly lost the use of his foot when his motorcycle was cut off by a motorist who did not have the right of way. The Soldier did have an operator's endorsement, but was not registered as a motorcycle operator by his former installation.

LOSSES POV/POM	
CAR	30/30
SUV/JEEP	11/10
TRUCK	6/7
MOTORCYCLE	37/36
PEDESTRIAN	3/3
OTHER*	3/3

*includes vans, ATVs, snowmobiles and bicycles

as of Aug. 4, 2011

FISCAL 2011
Chart A-Totals
thru July 2011

TOTAL	90/89
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Fiscal Year 2010:	87	Three Year Average:	95
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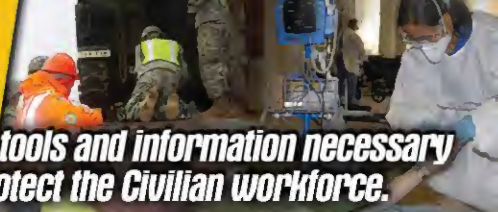
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